1.

Mr Thomas Mulford Jun.r January 25 1742

S.r after Service I have but a moment to Write and Cannot Tell you how we Did not Come Down Last fall but we are Comming now in about Three weeks with your money matt. and Horooth with money and other thing to buy more wood and Desire you would Gitt me some and Desire Robart Rich and Hopkin and any body you see to Gitt me some and their money Shall be paid nown a Loone as they Cod their wood from ye. Humb.d

Sarah Atkins Binney

221 - 12 - 9
332 - 14 - 9
143 - 13 - 2
421 - 19 - 6

1 = 17 = 1
8 = 04 = 5
1 = 17 = 1
1 = 19 = 17 = 1

0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	1
4	4	4	4	4

[illegible] of [illegible] in money 01-10-0

[illegible]

To

Mr Thomas Mulford Junr

at Truro

Know all men by these presents that I the subscriber do hereby oblige myself to pay to Johnbrown the sum of five pounds for value received witness my hand this 15 day of May 1743

the mul Ford Junr

2. march the 25 Day year 1772

1772 Joseph Cobb to keeping mother the forst year

1773 Richard Cobb to keeping mother the secd. £ 4=0=0

6=13=4

1774 Zacheus Rich to keeping mother treet. 8=0=0

1775 Joseph Cobb to keeping mother treet. 8=0=0

1776 Richard Cobb to keeping mother treet. 8=0=0

1777 Zacheus Rich for keeping when sick and Died Charg - - - - - - - - - - - - 8=0=0

for Doeting and furnel Charg - - - - 2=17=4

---

a. ~~Inventory of our mothers things that she left [illegible] Devided to one Ed~~

priro December 9 Day year 1777

Then Settled mother Treets things and prised them and Devided them a mongst the we a three

	£	s	d
Zacheus Rich	£ 2	4	10
Richard Cobb	2	4	10
Joseph Cobb	2	4	10

mother Freet.
Entery

3.

Know all Men by these Presents that I Mulford Cobb of Truro in the County of Barnstable and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, yeoman, In Consideration of the Sum of Sixty Dollars paid me by Joseph Cobb and Rachel Cobb his Wife, both of Truro aforesaid, (my Honoured Parents,) the Receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge, do hereby give grant, bargain exonerate and release unto them (the said Joseph Cobb, and Rachel Cobb, the free use and Improvement of the Dwelling-house, Land and other Building in Truro aforesaid (which said Joseph, and Rachel Cobb sold and conveyd to me this Present Day as may appear by their Deed to me; to have hold occupy and improve the same to and for their own Use and Benefit during during their Natural Life free from any Hindrance or Molestation.

In Witness whereof I the said Mulford Cobb have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this first Day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety Eight

Signed Sealed and delivered
in presence of us.

Samᵉ Waterman
Mehetable M Waterman

Mulford Cobb

Barnstable ss. February 1. 1798

Then the above named Mulford Cobb personally appeared and acknowledged the above written Instrument to be his free Act. and Deed

Before me

Samᵉ Waterman Justice Peace

4.

Know all men by these presents that I Nathaniel Wiley of Wellfleet in the County of Barnstable and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Mariner in Consideration of two Dollars and twenty five cents paid to me by Mulford Cobb of truro in the County and Common wealth a for Said the Receipt whereof I do hereby acknoledg and Satisfied and Contented therewith I do heare by giv grant sell and Convey unto him the Said Mulford Cobb a Certain peice of Cleared Land Layeng in truro and Butted and Bounded as follows beginning By the Southwest bound of Elisha Rickes Land and Runeng Southley in Christopher Cobbs Range thirty four Rod till it comes to Joseph Hatches fence thence Runing to the Northward as the fence know Stands till it Com to the East way thence westley as the fence Runes to the first Bounds Containing two hundred and two Rods to have and to hold ~~the said~~ all the above Said Land and unto him the Said Mulford Cobb his heirs Executors Administrators and Assigns for his Owen use and Benefit for Ever and I will warrant the premises free from all imumberances and will Defend the Same against the Lawfull Claimes and Demands of all persons in witness whereof I have heare unto Set my and Seale the third day of May and in the Yeare of one thousand and Eight Hundred — 1800

Sign Seald and Delivered in the presence of us
Joseph Cobb
Joseph Cobb Junr

Nathaniel Wiley

5.

Truro July the 14 1808

The Condishon of Sale of all the personal Estate of — Joseph Cobb decas late of truro Consting two hoses — 1/2 Oak of oxen two Cows Sheep and hous Hould furneture i Cart The Condeshions to Pade att ending of ten Days att the — delivery The Sale amount that to be in forty Eight ours —

Young Hose	39 —	00 —
Mr Mulford Cobb 1/2 —		
Dito 1/2	Cult Hose	7 —	60 —
~~Ditto~~	1/2 oxen	23 —	00 —
Ditto	old Cow	11 —	00
Ditto	young Cow	13 —	00
Ditto	1/2 Carte	8 —	00 —
Capt Obedigh Rich —	11 Sheep — 75 cn	8 —	25 —

The House Hould furneture are for to take it as it being appraised att the apprisal — They all agred and Consented to by a governor — — — is Here att present — — Obidiah Rich

4/6
90
28
9.00

6.

Truro December 18th 1811

Received of Mulford Cobb Executor to the last Will and Testament of Joseph Cobb late of Truro in the County of Barnstable deceased Sixty Dollars in full among Daniel Lombard wife Children ten Dollars Each there of what was given to them as a legacy in said Will to be paid in Money from said Child ren right in said Joseph Cobb Real Estate agreeable to said will witness our hands and Seal

Received Ten Dollars -- Polly Rich

Received Ten Dollars --

Received ten Dollars --

Received Ten Dollars -- Thomas Lombard

Received ten Dollars -- Daniel Lombard

Received ten Dollars -- John Lombard

7

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS,

That I Abigail Rich widow woman of Truro in the county of Barnstable and Commonwealth of massachusetts widow

in Consideration of one hundred and Ninety Dollars
paid by Freeman Cobb Jr of Truro aforesaid merchant

the Receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge, do hereby give, grant, sell and convey unto the said

Freeman Cobb Jnr and his heirs and assigns a certain peace of land and one half of a dwelling house standing thereon. bounded as follows viz, beginning at a stake and stone a little to the South west of the well, thence running Northerley up to the middle of the four door in said house, thence North through the house thence Northerley as the fence now stands to the northwest of the house to a stake and stone, thence southerley and westley as the fence runs to a stake and stone to the Edge of the Swamp thence Easterley to the first bounds with all the privileges thereunto belonging

To **Have** and to **Hold** the afore-granted Premises to the said Freeman Cobb Jr and his ——— Heirs and Assigns, to ——— his their Use and Behoof forever.

And I do covenant with the said Freeman Cobb Jnr his Heirs and Assigns, That I am lawfully seized in Fee of the afore-granted Premises; That they are free of all Incumbrances; That I have good Right to sell and convey the same to the said Freeman Cobb Jnr

And that I will warrant and defend the same Premises to the said Freeman Cobb Jr to his ——— Heirs and Assigns forever, against the lawful Claims and Demands of all Persons.

In Witness whereof, I the said Abigail Rich

have hereunto set my Hand and Seal this Seventh Day of Novmbr in the Year of our Lord *One thousand eight hundred and* seventeen

Signed, sealed, and delivered in Presence of us,

William Cole
Rachel Hatch

Abigail Rich

Barnstable ss. Novmbr 29 1817. *Then the above-named* Abigail Rich *acknowledged the above Instrument to be* her *free Act and Deed—before me,*

William Cole } Just. of Peace.

folio 230 &c

Recieved Decem^r. 30th. 1848 & is Recorded in the 77th. Book of Records for the County of Barnstable folio 231st. & is compared

Attest Jab C. Davis Register

8

Know all Men by these Presents,

That I Gedediah Paine Dyer of Truro in the County of Barnstable and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Mariner

for and in consideration of the sum of twenty two Dollars and Seventy five Cent — — — to me in hand, well and truly paid, at or before the signing, sealing and delivery of these Presents, by Molly Rich of said Truro Widow — — —

the receipt whereof I the said Gedediah Paine Dyer do hereby acknowledge, have granted, bargained and sold, and, by these Presents, do grant, bargain and sell unto the said Molly Rich A Certain Building in said Truro on the north side of Pamet River formerly Occupied as A Schoolhouse and known by the name of Village Schoolhouse with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging

— — — — — — — —

— — — — — — — —

— — — — — — — —

— — — — — — — —

— — — — — — — —

— — — — — — — —

To Have and to Hold the said granted and bargained Schoolhouse with all its privileges — — — — — unto the said Molly Rich her — — — — heirs, executors, administrators or assigns, to her and their only proper use, benefit and behoof forever. And I the said Gedediah Paine Dyer do avouch my self to be the true and lawful owner of the said Schoolhouse — — — —

and have in my full power, good right, and lawful authority to dispose of the said Schoolhouse in manner as aforesaid: And I do, for my self & my heirs, executors, and administrators, hereby covenant and agree to warrant and defend the said Schoolhouse — — — —

against the lawful claims and demands of all persons whatsoever, unto her the said Molly Rich her — heirs, executors, administrators or assigns.

In Witness whereof, I the said Gedediah Paine Dyer — — — have hereunto set my hand and seal this Second — — day of March in the year of our LORD one thousand eight hundred and twenty five

Gedediah P Dyer

Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of us,

Allen Hinckley

Ruth P Harding

Barnstable Ss March 2d A D 1825

then the abovenamed Gedediah Paine Dyer acknowledged the above instrument to be his free act and deed before me Allen Hinckley Justice of Peace

Deed of village
School House

Jedediah Paine Dyer to
Molly Rich
March 2. 1825

Deed
Jedediah P. Dyer
to
Molly Rich

Mar 12 2

Dr. The Big Mississippi Steamers

To Geo. & Nich. Waters

1826

May	7.	To 1 Qr. Brandy		1.50	
	8.	" 1 Ten Tureens		1.25	
		" 1 Coffee Pot		.60	
		" 1/2 doz deep Plates		.50	
		" 1/2 " Coffee Mugs		.75	
		" 1 Cabin Mop		1.62½	
		" 1 Scrubbing Brush		.50	
	9	" 1 Bbl. Superfine flour		5.62½	
	10	" 41 yds. Spun		[illegible]	
		" 11 yds. Rugging & other		[illegible]	
		" 1/2 doz Table Spoons		.75	
	11.	" 2 dishes		.50	
		" 1 Keg Bbl paint		2.00	
	13	1/2 Qr. Mahogany		.20	
	14	" 1/2 Qr. Do.		.20	
		" 12 1/2 yds. Rope	"	13.56½	
		" 1 Qr. Mahogany		.40	
	16	" 1 Qr. paint oil		1.12½	
		" 1/2 Keg yellow paint		1.50	
		" 1 paint Brush		.44	
		" 3 Seams marline		.30	
				8.00	46.1[illegible]
	17	" 2 Keg white lead		1.12½	
		" 1 Qr. paint oil		.40	
		" 1 Qr. Mahogany		.20	
		1 " Root Rody		.40	
		1 Qr. Mahogany		.70	
	18	" 2 paint Brushes		3.37½	
		" 3 Qts. paint oil		.40	
		" 1 Qr. Mahogany		.40	
	20	" 1 Qr. Do.		.20	
		" 1 Bottle Spirits turpentine		9.45	
	21.	" 1 Bbl. Whisky 33 3/4 Gs	28	1.75	
		" 1 Bus. Beans		3.75	
		" 6 Bus. Potatoes	62½	4.00	
		" 20 lbs. Coffee	20	7.00	
		" 10 lbs. Souchong Tea	70	3.00	
		" 2 Qt. Brandy		2.50	
		" 2 Qt. Gin		4.00	
		" 2 Kegs Bbl. paint		8.00	
		" 2 " white lead		3.60	
		" 9 Gs Bbl varnish	40	3.37½	
		" 3 Qt. paint oil	112½	.50	
		" 1/2 doz Tumblers		.50	58.62½
		" 4 Hickory Brooms			
		Carried Over			107.10

Amot Brotober 2			107.10
To. 10 qr. M. Canales	15	1.50	
" 171 lb. Rope	11	18.81	
" 2 Gp. Venegar		.75	
" 2. 2 G. Jugs		1.00	
" 10 lb. Chocolate		2.50	24.56
			131.66
" 2 Hams 37 lb	10		3.70
" 20 lb. Butter	20		4.00
			$139.36

Elisha Cobb

Jones

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Barnstable County.

Nymphas Marston, Esquire, Judge of the Court of Probate of Wills &c, for said County, Hereby certifies that Alvin Davis, Esquire, is Register of the Court of Probate for the County of Barnstable aforesaid, and that full faith and credit may & ought to be given to the certificate and attestation by him before subscribed, and the said attestation is in due form.

Given under my hand and seal of Office at Barnstable in the County of Barnstable, this thirtieth day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred & thirty.

Nymphas Marston } Judge of Probate for the County of Barnstable.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Barnstable County.

The subscriber Register of the Court of Probate for the County of Barnstable aforesaid, Hereby certifies and attests that on the thirteenth day of July in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty. Richard Cobb of Truro in the County of Barnstable, yeoman, was duly admitted Administrator of all and singular the Goods and Estate of Elisha Cobb, late of Truro in the County of Barnstable, yeoman, deceased, intestate, and became bound with sureties for the faithful discharge of said trust.

Given under my hand and seal of said Court, this thirteenth day of July, in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty.

Abner Davis } Register of Probate for the County of Barnstable.

11.

Hull Examined by W. S. Dimott Asst Supr.

(FORM 2115½)

Boiler Examined by J. B. O'Brien Asst Insp.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

One copy of this Certificate must be kept on board to be shown to any person demanding it.

CERTIFICATE OF INSPECTION

FOR

FREIGHT, TOWING, AND OTHER STEAMERS

OF ONE HUNDRED TONS BURDEN AND UNDER.

(Secs. 4426 and 4427, R. S.)

Fishing Steamer Elsie. This Certificate Expires May 9th, 1896.

State of Mass. District of Boston } ss:

(Application having been made in writing to the undersigned, *Inspectors for this District*, to inspect the Fishing Steamer Elsie, of So. Truro, in the State of Mass., whereof So. Truro Fish Weir Co. is owner and D. B. Rich is master, and having performed that duty, on the 9th day of May, 1895, Do certify that the said vessel was built at Gloucester, in the State of Mass., in the year 1889; that the Hull is constructed of wood, and, as shown by official records, is of Est 4.77 gross tons and Est 4.77 net tons burden; that the said vessel is provided with One Condensing Engine of 5 3/4 inches diameter of cylinder and 7 1/2 feet stroke of piston, and One Boiler, 4 ft feet in length and 3 6 inches in diameter, made of Steel, in the year 189 4, and allowed a steam pressure of 125 pounds to the square inch, and no more. The said vessel is required to carry the following complement of officers and crew, 1 Pilot, 1 Engineer, 1 Crew, and is permitted to navigate, for one year, the waters of the Mass. Harbors & Bays, ~~between~~ in daylight only touching at intermediate ports, a distance of about miles and return.

THE FOLLOWING PARTICULARS OF INSPECTION ARE ENUMERATED, VIZ:

Boilers, by whom built: Ward Brock Co.	Flues ... No. —	Record in office of local inspectors at ... *
	Flues ... diameter —	Hydrostatic pressure applied ... lbs.
Boilers, where built: Boston	Flues ... thickness —	Steam pressure allowed ... lbs.
Boilers, thickness of plate: .33"	Safety-valves ... No. 1	Hand-pumps — No. —
Boiler shell ... drilled — , 189 ,	Gauge-cocks ... No. 3	Hose ... size — Hose ... feet —
... thickness of plate found — 100 inch.	Low-water gauges ... No. 1	Oars ~~and life-lines~~: Yes No.
Boilers, tensile strength of plate: 60 M	Steam-gauges ... No. 1	Boats ... No. 1
Boilers, ductility of plate: 20 %	Fusible plugs ... No. 1	Fire Buckets 2 Axes ... No. 1
Longitudinal seams: double riveted.	Donkey boilers, thickness of plate	Cork life-preservers ... No. 7
Longitudinal seams: punched holes.	" " tensile strength of	Size 4 1/2 x 4" signal lights.
Record in local inspector's office at: Boston *	" " ductility of	Steel in boiler made by Glasgow Steel Co. Pittsburgh Pa.

State of Mass. County of Suffolk } ss:

Albert C. Crandall, Inspector of Hulls. (seal)

Andrew J. Savage, Inspector of Boilers.

Sworn to before me this 4th day of June, 1895.

Geo. A. Copeland Notary Public (seal)

Custom House, Boston June 6, 1895.

I hereby certify that the above Certificate is a true copy of the original on file at this office.

William Gray Collector of Customs.

The above form of Inspection Certificate was adopted by the Board of Supervising Inspectors at the annual meeting held in January, 1885. Amended February, 1888—January, 1890—February, 1892—February, 1894.

*Inspectors may in all cases accept the record as given in this certificate, when the Steamer is inspected in a district other than that where the record is kept, noting in Form 2112 the date of certificate and place of inspection.

Amended Form approved February 8, 1894.

J. G. CARLISLE, *Secretary of the Treasury.*

JAS. A. DUMONT, *Supervising Inspector General, President of the Board.*

(El. 2-10-'94—10,000.) 2—136

Form 2115½.

.....STEAMER

.....

Gross tonnage .....

Net tonnage .....

OWNER:

.....

Certified copies issued ....., 18..

Inspectors: .....

.....

Received at Custom House ....., 18..

2-136

121

THE TRURO NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION · INC

DAVID L. SNOW, TREASURER

MRS. S. OSBORNE BALL, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

TRURO, MASSACHUSETTS

My dear Miss West;

The old *South Truro Meeting House* high upon the dunes, a conspicuous landmark for many miles, is now the property of the *Truro Neighborhood Association*, a non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of Massachusetts. This dignified building is threatened with destruction. To prevent such a fate, those interested in preserving a structure typical of Cape Cod life in the nineteenth century must now come to the rescue.

It is proposed to raise a fund of $20,000, part of which will be an endowment for maintenance and part used to restore the building and remodel it for service as a community house and a museum for Cape Cod relics.

To collect so large a sum many contributions are needed. The names of all who give will appear in a book to be placed in the building. It is proposed to place the names of those subscribing over $50 upon a tablet in the vestibule.

Will you not sign the enclosed pledge card and send your gift

to David L. Snow, Treasurer
Truro, Cape Cod,
Massachusetts.

Sincerely yours,

Frederic A. Washburn
President

RESTORING THE OLD SOUTH TRURO MEETING HOUSE

CAPE
SCENERY
Provincetown, Mass.

[illegible]

Vuo i

The South Truro Meeting House

by Phyllis Duganne

PRIVATELY PRINTED

TRURO NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

1938

The South Truro Meeting House, set high on a hill "to be nearer God and a landmark for the fishermen," has behind it eighty-seven years of a gallant, but a losing fight. It was raised in the richness of an old era, toward the close of the brief period of Truro's commercial prosperity, and today, less than a century after its dedication, it can survive only through the interest and help of people who value it for its architectural beauty, and for the memory of the men and women who built it there.

When it was completed, in 1851, its seating capacity of more than five hundred was sometimes insufficient for the worshippers who came to its doors. On Sunday evenings, then, one had to leave home early to get a seat; extra benches were brought in for the children and young people. There was another Methodist church in Truro Center, and still a third in North Truro, but in those days the three Truros had a population of over two thousand, and the young men did not have to go away from Cape Cod to earn a living.

Pamet Harbor lighthouse, near the present railroad station, was but two years old, and Truro Harbor which exists today only in memory, was a curved sheen of water lined with docks and warehouses, with stores and lofts, windmills and salt-works, and many boats rode there at anchor, while the sound of hammers and saws sang out the building of more in Truro shipyards.

Forty years later, in 1891, the annual report of the Southern New England Conference of the Methodist-Episcopal Church reports a membership, in South Truro, of but forty-one people, and the population of the Truros had dropped well below one thousand.

The history of Methodism on Cape Cod is interesting. The first Methodist minister arrived, "lying windbound in Prov-

The spire was struck by lightning on the night of March 21st, 1940, and the evening the T.T. —

incetown harbor," in 1793. At least so the Reverend Joseph Snelling, who himself came to Truro to "exhort" in 1795, recorded in his autobiography. Shebnah Rich, the Truro historian of 1884, questions his accuracy; Mr. Snelling, he says, wrote his life when an old man and, "as is evident, relied entirely upon his memory"—a memory which Mr. Rich obviously doubts. In any case, the first Methodist, whoever he was, came and was eloquent to some and anathema to others. An attempt to build a church in Provincetown was discouraged by violent hostilities; in 1795, when the first Methodist Society was formed in Provincetown, and the first church built there, an indignant mob destroyed the timbers, tarred and feathered the minister in effigy, and threatened to do the same to him in person.

Truro was more receptive, and so the first Methodist church on Cape Cod, and the second in all New England, was raised in Truro in 1794, on land donated by Jesse Rich of South Truro, the site of the Pine Grove Cemetery, eastward of the present church. It was wooded with oak, this land, and the trees cut to make room for the Meeting House provided its timbers; the boards and shingles were contributed by the persecuted Provincetown Methodists, who brought them over in boats and landed under the bank at South Truro. The only money spent seems to have been eight dollars for nails; there was no plastering or sheathing, and the swallows flew in and out and nested there.

In 1831, the need for a larger church was met by the building of what Shebnah Rich describes as "a commodious and convenient house for the time," set a few rods further west toward the Bay. The money for this building was generously subscribed by South Truro people—a hundred dollars from one resident, another hundred from a young man of twenty-one who pledged and paid it out of his first schools of fish. Of these two benefactors, the Long Nook historian comments: "It is gratifying to state that neither of these men has ever been pushed for want of a hundred dollars."

This second church seated less than three hundred people, so on February 12, 1849, it was voted: "*That the Parrish give the trustees liberty to call a pew-holders' meeting for to take into consideration the propriety of moving the meeting-house.*"

The available records skip all the excitement of the moving, but it must have been so considered and agreed, because in 1851 the present church, still further westward toward the Bay than the second, was built, partially from the timbers of the second church—and none can say that there was not an oaken beam or two from that first Meeting House of 1749. Miss Hannah S. Cobb of South Truro, for many years Recording Secretary of the church, wrote of the new building: "*The church was moved down west of the Town road, enlarged and remodelled, and a beautiful Vestry was put under it, also a very sweet-toned Bell was hung in the belfry.*"

Apparently this new Meeting House, too, was financed entirely by the people of South Truro, a fact which today seems extraordinary, since in this year, 1938, there are not enough people in South Truro, let alone Methodists, to fill the first dozen rows of the church. But in 1851, there were houses where today a sharp eye can discover cellar-holes; where there grow lilac clumps or poplar trees, run-away lilies or double-petalled fragrant narcissus, there lived the congregation. Fire has taken many buildings; some were torn down, and an astonishing number were moved away bodily, to Truro, North Truro and Wellfleet. Whitmanville is almost entirely composed of houses moved from South Truro.

The unbuilt pews were sold at auction, as was the custom—one hundred dollars, ninety-nine, seventy-five, according to their positions—and from the sale of the pews, the church was built. Its wide front doors open into an ante-chamber with steps leading upward from right and left into the church, and central steps, below the choir gallery, descending into the Vestry. Even today, with plaster broken, floor boards splintered, the old stylized ecclesiastical wallpaper torn away

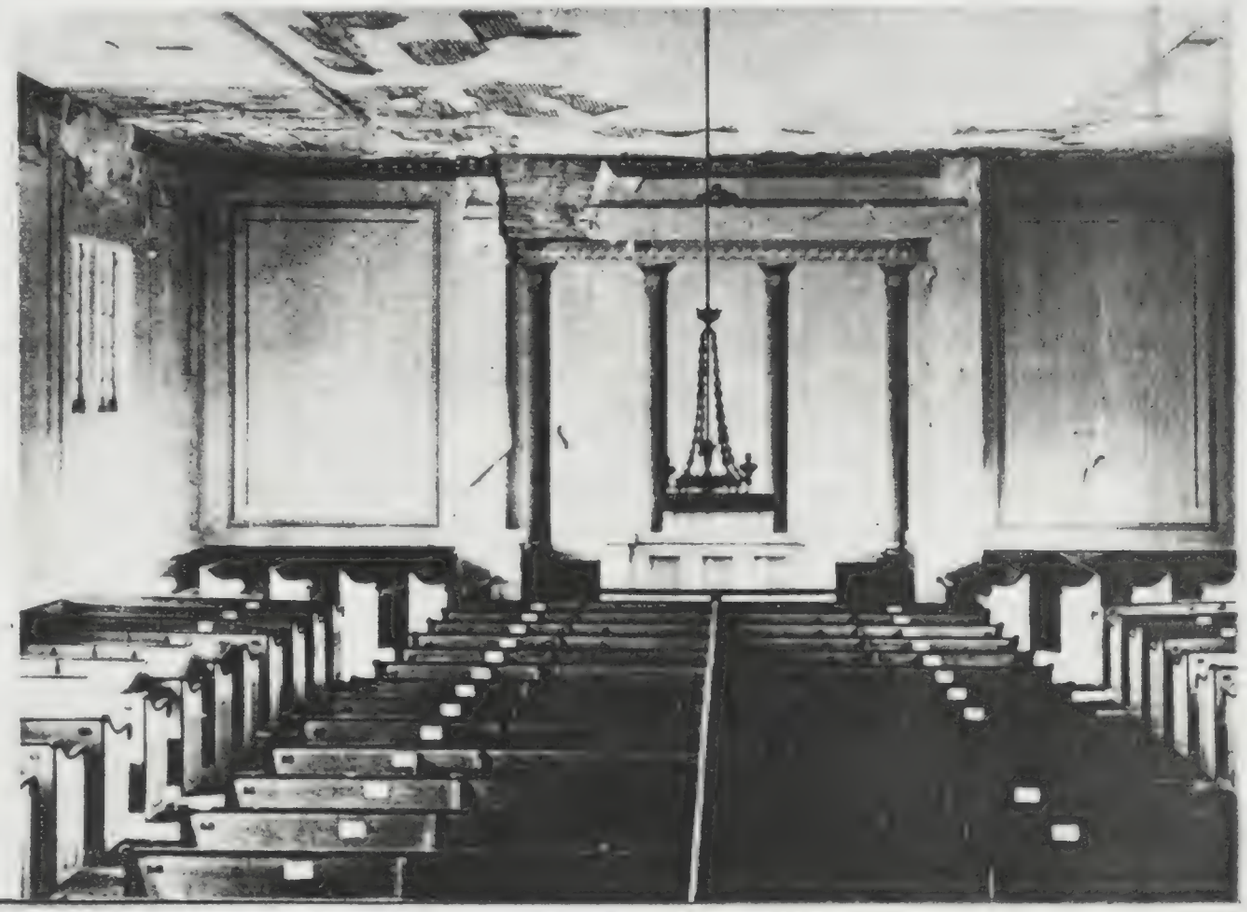
from the walls, it is a dignified and beautiful house of worship.

The pews are ivory color, with curved arms and rails that may be mahogany; their backs are painted a subdued salmon-pink. Simple in design and, one suspects, none too comfortable for long sermons, the empty rows are impressive, a double tier running down the middle of the church, a single line beyond each aisle, and at right angles, facing the altar, two more rows of them. From north and south, four long windows give light and a view of Cape Cod Bay and the Truro hills; the land and the sea by which they lived were beautifully framed for the men and women who worshipped there.

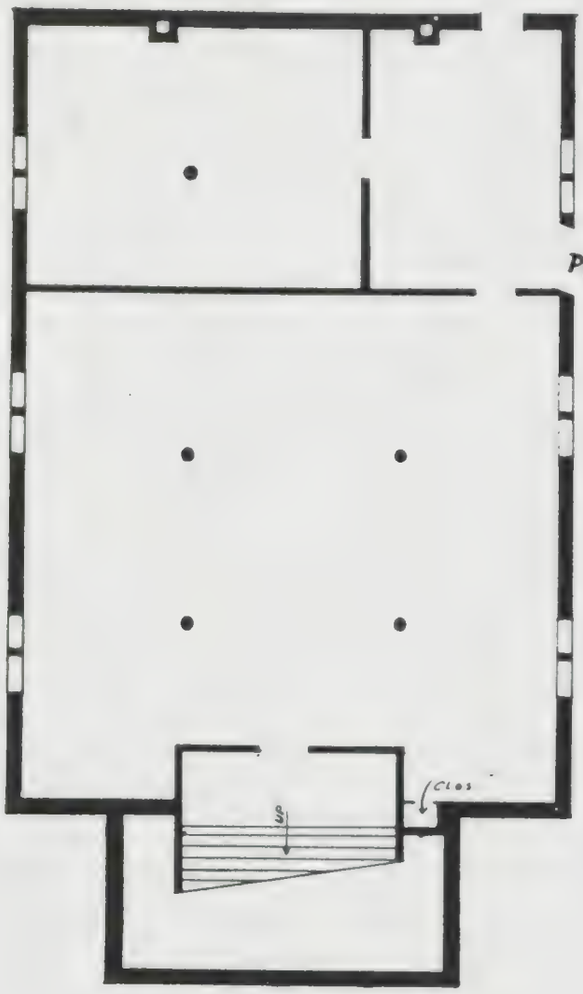
In the basement, the Vestry is less formal, a pleasant room with plain wooden benches, a kitchen and dining-room. Here were held the Board Meetings and the social life of the Church, the Ladies' Aid sewing-circles, the Missionary Society, the suppers, fairs, evening singing and services. "Necktie parties" were one of the favorite forms of entertainment; for these occasions, each lady made herself an apron, the gayer and more distinctive the calico, the better, and she left enough material to make also a necktie, which was sealed in an envelope. The gentlemen of the congregation paid each one dollar, sight unseen, for his envelope, and his partner for supper and the evening was she whose apron matched his tie. Fairs, in those early days, often took in more than three hundred dollars in a single evening, and the next morning, any unsold articles were auctioned off to the highest bidder.

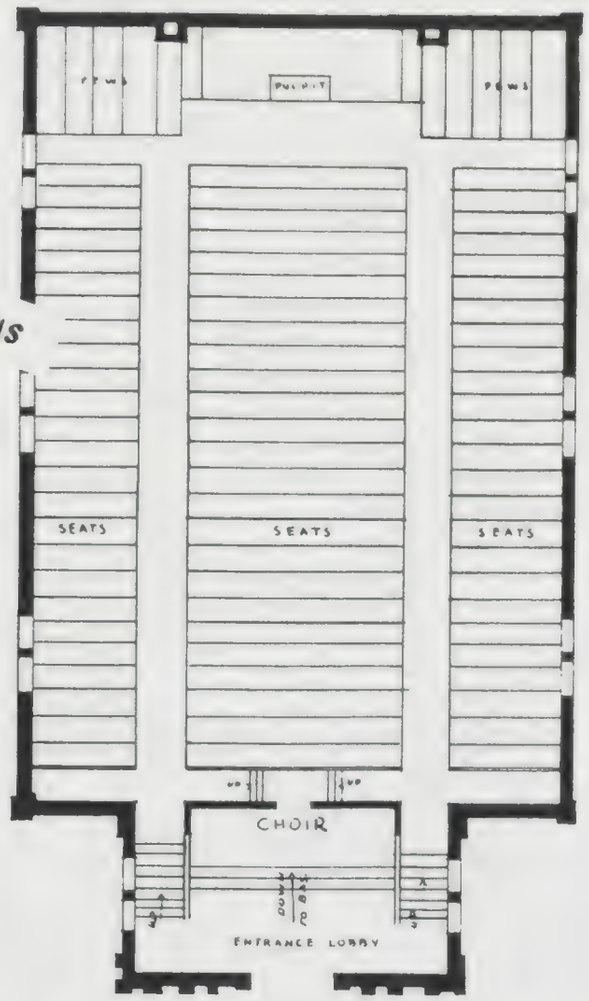
The older inhabitants of South Truro, today, have tender and nostalgic memories of laughter and good times, in that lower room. Cakes that were bid up to several dollars, neckties that were furtively exchanged, treasured objects brought home to children too young to attend, from the Fair. Voices swelled in old hymns, and gossip of the seven seas hung in the air above the quilting frames. Women looked out these windows to see ships returned safe to Pamet Harbor, and other women came in black dresses, mourning ships which never would return. The Sunday School was held there,

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY MR. F. A. LOMBARD

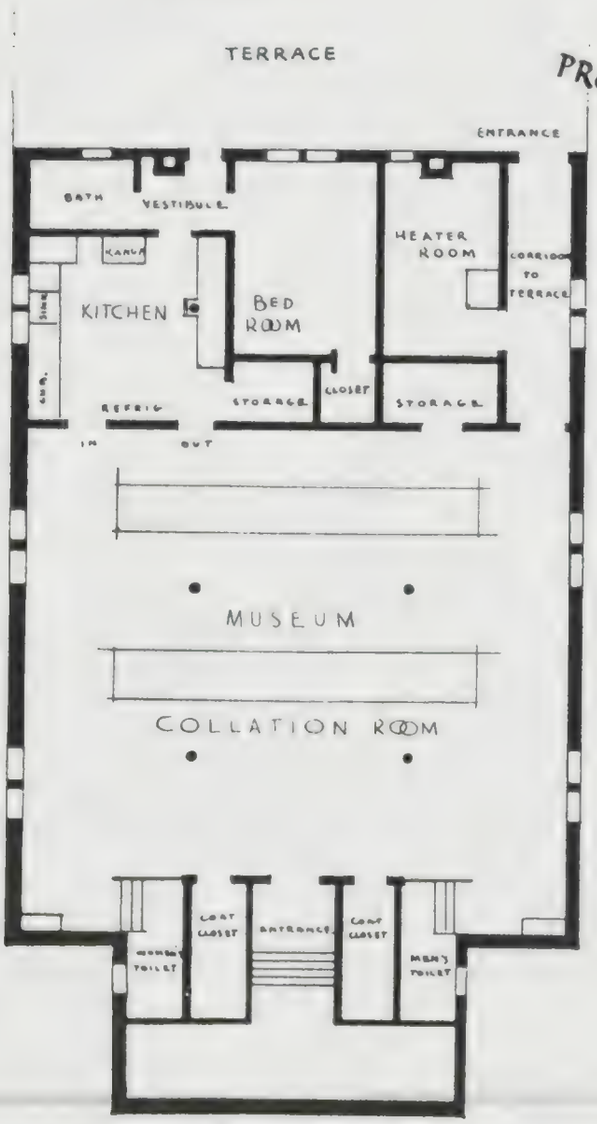


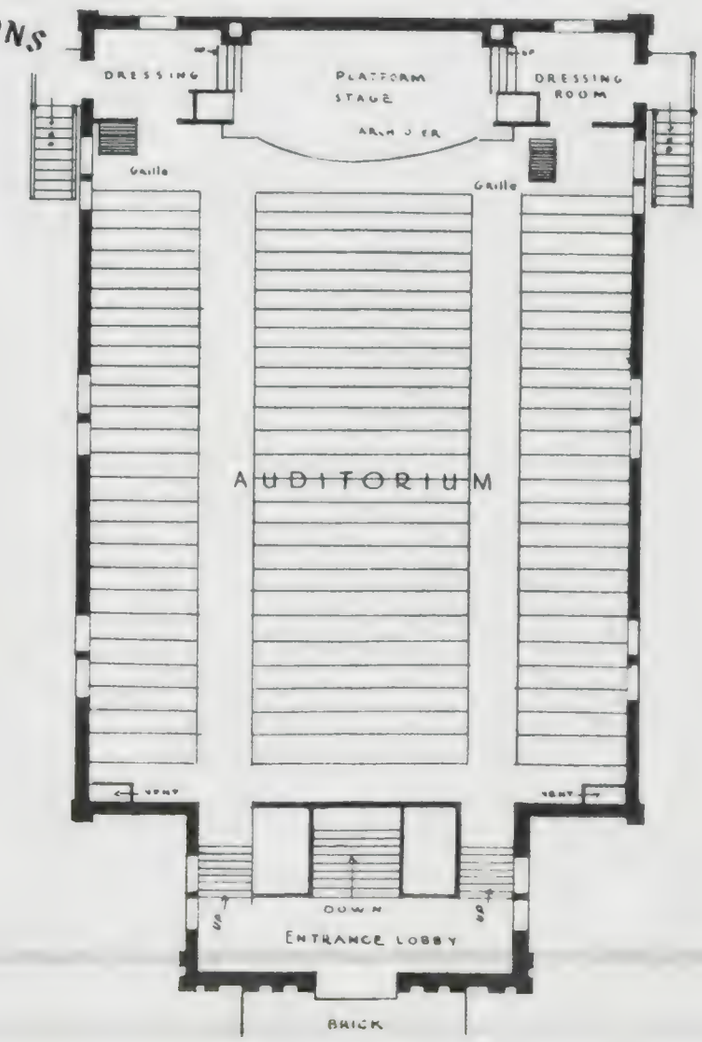
PRESENT PLANS



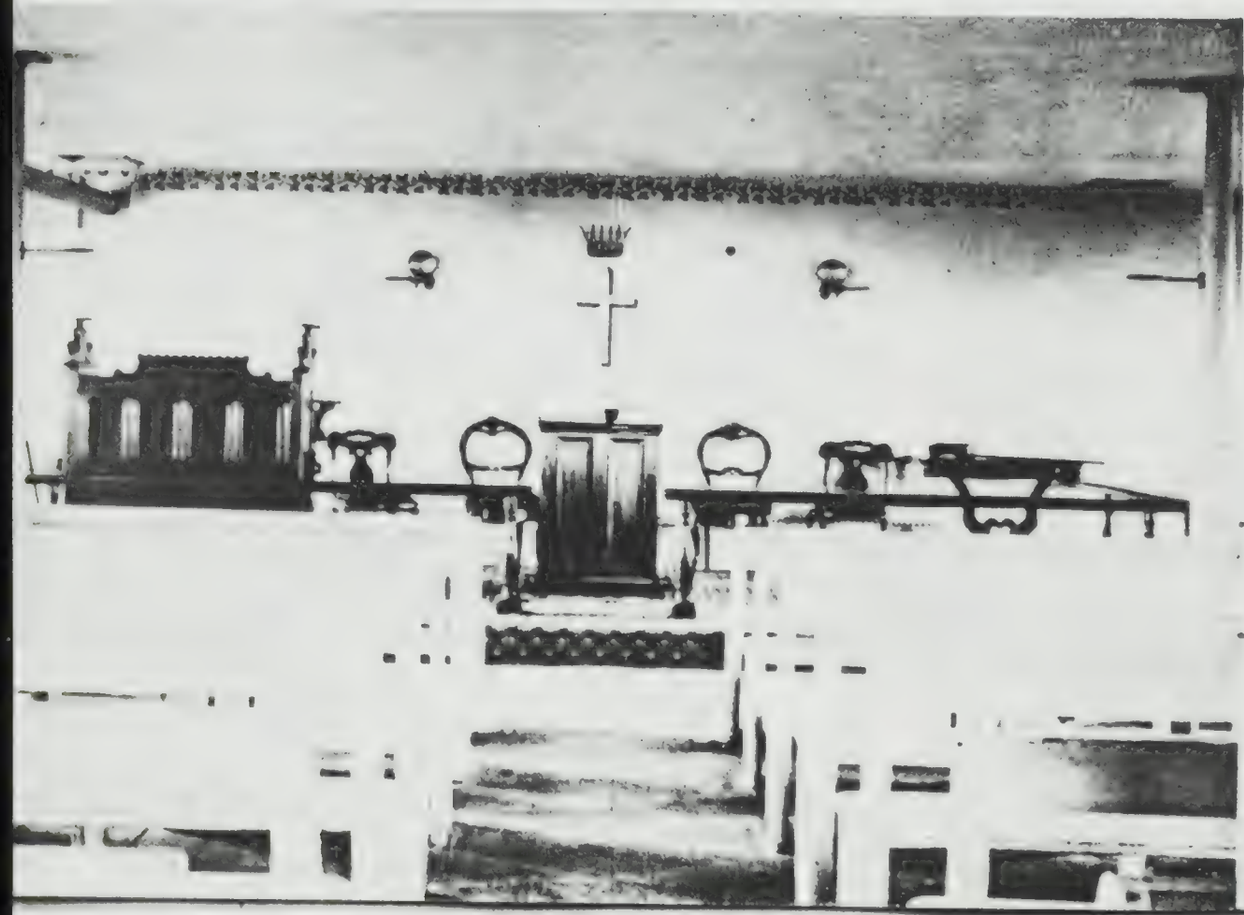


PROPOSED ALTERATIONS





EDWARD SEARS READ & CHARLES EVERETT
ARCHITECTS BOSTON, MASS.



where boys and girls wrote their Bible lessons upon little slates with squeaking slate-pencils, and the Board, grave, bearded men with sailors' eyes, discussed Temperance and the use of that horrid weed, Tobacco, and Dancing and Sin.

In those middle days of the nineteenth century, the church was truly the center of life. People came, for the most part on foot, since there were few horses in Truro, following the myriad paths which still wind among the hills, from Eagle Neck and Paradise Valley, from Pamet Point and even Bound Brook Island, to the Meeting House. Twice every Sunday they came, and in the evenings, they sang as they walked home through the familiar darkness, whole families of them, in an age when families were large.

Memories are oddly conflicting, but some members of the old congregation say that originally the church was painted white with green shutters, and that, originally, it had a tall, slender steeple which rocked and swayed in the roaring winds that sweep over the hilltops. There was a picket fence about the yard and the road was soft white sand.

In 1851, South Truro was an active, flourishing community, with its Meeting House the pivot of activities. Solid, well-cared for houses nestled against the hills where now no houses are, and westward, upon the Bay, white sails flashed in the sun, whalers and fishermen and merchantmen, brigs and barks and ships, five, six, seven-masted schooners. The Packets moved across the water, to and from Boston, and the Truro stage coach left its shed on the Depot Road and rumbled toward Provincetown, while below and to the north, Pamet Harbor bustled with activity.

The sea colored everything, in those days, even the churches; one has only to read the old records to know that. The earliest of these sadly inadequate reports, recopied by one of the subsequent ministers, begins with this truly Christian statement: "*It will be observed that the Record is broken in many places and deficient in nearly all. This arises, probably, from the fact that the Methodists of the last generation*

were more attentive to spiritual matters than to temporal." But deficient or not, they are both interesting and salty.

In the Membership Book, one finds "Lost At Sea," "Drowned In Cape Cod Bay," almost as often as one finds "Deceased" or "Removed." "Expelled" is none too rare an entry; in a fine ministerial hand beside the name Collins Cobb, Dismissed from Membership, is written the Remark: "*Too cobby—all cob and no corn.*" This was in 1839. In 1842, the Board voted: "*That the Pastor be invited to prepare a sermon on the history of Methodism in South Truro for delivery at such time as may suit his convenience after the summer's fishing is over and the men have returned.*"

The summer's fishing, and Truro's relationship to the sea in general, were still good in 1851; the preceding years had seen a flurry of building along the shores of Truro harbor, more and more wharves, more storehouses and sheds for packing mackerel; prosperity was in the air. In February, 1853, the Board voted: "*To choose a building committee to select a house spot and superintend the building of the parrish house and the selling of the old at a cost not to exceed one thousand dollars.*" In these fat years, five hundred dollars was voted annually for the minister; the Records show births and marriages, new members, more money voted for various purposes. The "very sweet toned Bell" rang often, twice each Sunday, and on week-days for occasional church weddings, funerals, or other community events.

But all the time, Truro Harbor was steadily filling up with sand, despite constant dredging, and now the ships and schooners, the larger and still larger boats which were crossing the Bay, could no longer enter. In 1854, only three years after the building of the Meeting House, a final and unsuccessful attempt was made to improve and dredge the waters, and in 1855, Pamet lighthouse was discontinued, and in its darkness, there is something of symbolism. The light at the entrance to Truro Harbor was extinguished, and it was the beginning of the end.

In 1855, the Board voted: "*That Asa C. Paine be tithing man. Voted the tithing man empose the law on those that disordly behave.*" "Empose the law" he could and did, but no tithing man could hold together the departing congregation. The Civil War period saw more and more church members move away; in 1865, the New England Methodist-Episcopal Conference claimed 116 members in South Truro and valued the Meeting House at four thousand dollars. By 1876, South Truro could no longer support a minister of its own, and from that year on, Truro and South Truro were united under the same service.

The lightning struck literally in 1880; the original steeple was destroyed, and the first plaster fell within the old church. The Annual Conference, in 1881, reports: "*That the church at South Truro which was injured by lightning last summer has been repaired and improved and all bills paid*"—but the membership, according to the same report, was now reduced to sixty.

In 1892, the congregation was still able to raise $215.52 for the painting of the church and parrish-house. Perhaps it was at that date, in a period of tightening purse-strings, that the color was changed from white to the more practical tawny buff which the years so weathered and blended with the bare hills about it, and which so many artists from all over the country have reproduced on canvas. Some say that the darker color was selected because it made the church stand out more sharply against the sky from the Bay, made it a clearer landmark for the men who still went fishing. The Records, from about 1890 on, show only $150 voted yearly for their pastor, and $6.00 for the Elder; by 1895, the membership was reduced to thirty-one, and the value of the church building cut in half, to two thousand dollars.

In 1897, the Conference reports twenty-eight members for its South Truro Meeting House—of whom thirteen were non-resident! Only fifteen loyal supporters left; the dwindling congregation was faithful, but unable to carry the burden.

Then came the Tempest, the storm that is still remembered and talked of, in Truro. Great trees were uprooted, barns and out-buildings tumbled down; the Meeting House shuddered and trembled before its force, and the Parrish House, beside it, was twisted clear about on its foundations. On August 16, 1905, this building, erected with so much love and hope for the minister in 1853, was sold for $125 and carted off to North Truro, where it still sits on the east side of the state highway, halfway up the hill that rises north from the crossroad to Highland Light. Fifty dollars of this sum went to the desperately needy church; the rest was divided between the Pine Grove Cemetery and the church creditors.

The last minister to hold services regularly in the Meeting House, belowstairs in the shadowy Vestry, since the beautiful upper church had even then been long in disrepair, was the Reverend Walter J. Yates, who came to Truro in 1918—and found a recorded congregation of six, in the southern Truro. He had resided for two years previous in Wellfleet, and preaching three sermons each Sunday, in Wellfleet and in the two Truros, was an overwhelming task. After his death in 1925, there were only occasional services held in South Truro.

Miss Hannah Cobb, still faithful Recording Secretary when Mr. Yates arrived, had written wistfully in the Record, six years before: "*Scores, and I might safely say hundreds, have gone out from these three churches to other towns . . . and oh! so many have passed on to a better land, and so very few have come to take their places.*"

So very few came, to take their places.

The Meeting House doors were closed and locked, the tall windows boarded and nailed. In Truro Center, the Methodist church—the one which Shebnah Rich described as "a neat and quite tasty little chapel"—had also given up the ghost. In 1912, the Methodists and Congregationalists had merged, and all Protestant service in Truro and South Truro was held on Town Hall hill, in the Congregational church. In 1925,

the "tasty little chapel" was bought by Arnold Slade, and removed to a hill on the north side of Pamet River, remodelled into a studio.

Lonely, and each year increasingly austere, the South Truro Meeting House waited, with a lilac clump and a few poplar seedlings to the north, to show where its companion Parrish House had once stood. Birds fluttered about in the dim interior, more plaster fell and powdered the floors and pews, rains and winds lashed the weathered boards and shingles. Artists of all sorts came and made pictures of its melancholy beauty, in oil and water-color, etchings and lithographs and wood-cuts. In samplers and hooked rugs, it has been reproduced, and a thousand and more times photographed.

Boys, and people old enough to know better, broke in through the Vestry windows, time after time, to steal and destroy, or "take home souvenirs," to ring the sweet toned Bell and peer out at the quiet empty hills from the belfry. Old parishioners salvaged what they could; records and prayer-books and hymnals, the organ which stood against the east wall of the choir-galleries, many objects which will be returned when the church is again ready to receive them. Glass was broken, mortar dried and crumbled in the foundations, shingles sagged and rotted, but the greatest danger to the old structure was from fire, a stroke of lightning or, more likely, a carelessly dropped match or cigarette or even deliberate mischief.

All of Truro wanted the Meeting House saved, and in 1931, the newly organized Truro Neighborhood Association became interested in its preservation and restoration. In 1936, the Methodist-Episcopal Church deeded the building to them, and the first step toward preserving the old church was taken.

Most of the congregation has "passed on to a better land," as Miss Hannah Cobb wrote, and it is now for their heirs, and all the others who have admired the Meeting House, to answer the unexpressed plea in her words and prove that more than a few "have come to take their place."